REFORM FROM THE GRASS ROOTS

THE STORY OF A PEOPLE'S FIGHT FOR THE MENTALLY ILL

BY MIKE GORMAN
THE DAILY OKLAHOMAN
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SECTION 1 - AN INNOCENT START - A SPOT STORY.

Today, Oklahoma is the pride and joy of all those interested in the vast field of mental hygiene for the pioneer job it has accomplished in care of its mentally ill. Lavish tributes, attesting to the effectiveness of the state's work, have come from Dr. George Stevenson, president-elect of the American Psychiatric association; both Drs. Karl and Will Menninger; the Lasker Foundation; the National Committee for Mental Hygiene; and a host of other individuals and organizations.

Exactly two years ago Oklahoma was singled out, in report after report, as being at or near the bottom of the list in its treatment facilities for the mentally ill. A prominent magazine writer, looking about in 1946 for a state whose "care" of the mentally ill was atrocious enough for an expose article, had set his sights on Oklahoma.

We beat the writer to it, but not by virtue of premeditation or any long-range planning. It all started in the haphazard, spontaneous way every great newspaper crusade has gotten under way during the last century or two.

I had just returned from a very happy honeymoon on the west coast in June of 1946. On my first day back, I was sitting in the air-conditioned luxury of our city room, very relaxed and peacefully contemplating the City Hall run which I would take over in a few days.

My reveries of a great career as a municipal reporter were rudely interrupted by a loud-mouthed copy kid who informed me Harold Johnson, assistant managing editor of the paper, wanted to see me.

I walked over to Johnson's desk, wondering what he wanted to spank me for.

Johnson told me E.K. Gaylord, the publisher, had recently received a complaint about conditions in the biggest mental hospital in the state from the Bishop of one of Oklahoma's largest churches. The Bishop, who had a relative who was a patient there, thought an article ought to be written telling of conditions.

Johnson asked me if I'd go down to Norman, the site of the hospital, and do a factual article on the physical conditions, food, treatment of patients, and so on. I didn't look or feel very enthusiastic but I said I'd go down.

It was a frightfully hot July day, and a hot July day in Oklahoma is just ten degrees above mean temperature in a blast furnace. Getting out of the stifling bus at Norman, I asked the driver where Central State hospital was. He looked at me a little queerly, but pointed out the direction.

Norman is a lovely little University town, and as I walked along the tree-lined streets with their pretty white homes, I began to feel a little better.

The approach to the hospital was most pleasant. Passing through the main gate, I ambled past well-kept lawns to the main administration building, a well-built, two-story brick affair.

Waiting in the tastefully furnished waiting room of the building, I began to feel that this might be a rather pleasant business after all.

Dr. D.W. Griffin, the hospital's superintendent, came out to greet me. In his 70's, and walking very haltingly, he seemed to me then to be the most tired, anguished looking man I'd run into in my entire newspaper career. He had been at Norman since 1899, eight

years before statehood.

I told the doctor what I wanted. He was very cooperative - he asked me where I'd like to start. I said I didn't know; that I had never been in a mental hospital before.

We started out at Hope Hall, the general receiving building. When the guard unlocked the big iron door and let us into the first ward, an awful stench, as powerful and brash as a physical thing, hit me across the face. There was absolutely no ventilation - not one fan - and it was 95 degrees in the shade.

I walked down the center of the ward. I saw one patient climbing over the front of his bed to get to the floor. Rather odd, I thought, until I noticed the beds were jammed so closely together that it was the only way a patient could move about.

The next two hours were just a series of spine-shattering shocks. I felt like a beaten fighter being smashed again and again before the towel is finally thrown in. Patients writhing and grovelling on the floor; continued moanings and screamings; seclusion cells where patients, seen through peep-hole slits in the iron doors, thrashed about nakedly on cold stone floors; and everywhere dirt and filth.

At noon, the superintendent suggested lunch. I said, "Fine", but I thought, "Oh God". After lunch, he suggested we take a look at the women's wards.

The first building we approached had a cornerstone tablet - "Detention Ward for the Violently Insane" - over the entrance arch. There were iron prison bars in front of each window.

We went up to the second floor, closed off by prison bar gates. As the superintendent and I walked toward the gates, a number of the women patients fought one another for positions at the bars, yell-

ing and screaming that they wanted out.

The dirt and over-crowding were almost indescribable. In one of the wards, the beds were double-decked. Several patients were sprawled out on the toilet floor.

The superintendent looked at his watch. He said the psychotic females would now be eating down in the dining room - would I like to see it? "I certainly wouldn't", I thought, but I told him I would like nothing better.

That dining room made Dante's "Inferno" seem like a country club. 500 mentally sick people jammed their way into a filthy hall only nine feet high. There were big holes in the floor, and several patients took bad falls as they pushed their way in. One elderly woman got her foot caught in one of the foot-long gaps and went down with a resounding thud; the patient next to her, laughing loudly, pulled her up by the hair.

The patients fought for seats on long, wooden benches. They were packed in so closely they had to keep their elbows in at their sides as they ate.

The food was "served" by fellow patients because there weren't enough attendants to go around. Each patient had a round aluminum pan without any compartments, and the food was flung into the pan by one of the servers. Sometimes the food landed in the pans, sometimes it missed and splattered all over a patient. When it splattered about, a number of patients would howl and point at the victim.

As we were leaving the building, one of the patients, pushing her head up against a second-floor window bar, let out a string of curses at the superintendent. I felt the pit of my stomach go green. I rushed toward the back of the building, but it rushed out before I could get there. As I stood clutching the wall while my

very insides seemed to spill out, a gray-haired patient who was leaving the cafeteria walked up and started pounding me on the back.

From there, we went to the ward for seniles. Here was the biggest heart-breaker of them all - over 1,000 of these unfortunates living out their last days in unbelievable squalor. They jammed the hospital to the bursting point, giving it the hopeless, tired atmosphere one finds in homes for the aged.

In the old women's sections, there wasn't enough room to do anything. Not even space for slop jars on the floor - many of the women had them in bed with them, sitting alongside cookies, candies, and other foods.

About 4 o'clock, we got back to the superintendent's office. I had about 20 pages of notes, sweat-stained and crumpled. I asked him a number of questions about the staff, treatment, and so on, thanked him profusely and walked out into the summer twilight. I was never so glad to get out of any place in my life.

Riding back in the bus, I looked around at the passengers. There were a number of pretty girls looking fresh and cool in their latest summer frippery. Some of the men, in cool tropicals and Palm Beach jobs, were right out of "Esquire". I had a strong impulse to get up and personally spit in each of their well-scrubbed faces. Then I looked down at my powder blue slacks and white shoes. I just shook my head.

I got back to the office at 6 p.m. I had a good two hours until deadline time. Better get started on it right away. I put some fresh copy paper in the typewriter, and started fishing for a lead.

I whacked out a pretty fiery lead, pulling in the hot weather, Dante's Inferno, Palm Beach suits, and the rottenness at Norman.

Then I tried to slide into the story. I went along allright

while I was describing the physical squalor. Then I tried to describe the various types of patients. I stopped clacking the keys. I went over and looked up "schizophrenic" in the dictionary.

I came back and started clacking away again. I rolled along for a few paragraphs. Then I went over to the dictionary and looked up the word "psychotic".

I came back and reading what I had written I then did something I had never done before as a newspaperman: I jerked the copy out, rolled it up into a small, angry ball, and fired it into the wastebasket. I pulled on my coat and headed for home.

I didn't want to get too close to people, so I didn't take the bus. I walked the two miles home. I watched the kids playing in the yards, the men sipping cool beer in the taverns, the pretty girls in their summer dresses.

As soon as I got home, I spilled my gut to my poor wife. We sat up and talked until 3 a.m. I told her I was ashamed because I couldn't write the story. She said maybe I could write it in the morning.

The next morning, I went over to Johnson and told him what had happened. He looked a little surprised, but asked me what I wanted to do. I asked him if I couldn't do a job on all the mental hospitals in the state. He frowned for a minute, then said he thought it would be a fine idea. How much time would I need?

"A couple of weeks," I guessed.

"O.K., boy, hit it hard," he said.

Those were the only "instructions" I ever got. He went back to pencilling some copy on his desk.

I didn't even know where any of the other six mental hospitals were. I went up to the library and got a list.

Later, I asked Johnson about a photographer. I said I wanted a guy who didn't throw up easily. He gave me George Tapscott, who had been a combat photographer with Oklahoma's famed 45th division.

SECTION 2 - WE TOUR THE MENTAL HOSPITALS

We started out the second week in July. Our first stop was back at Norman, where we spent three days casing every inch of the place.

Our toughest morning was watching 30 patients undergo deep insulin shock. There was only one doctor and one nurse on duty as the disturbed patients writhed through four hours of intermittent convulsions. The sight of them as they came out of their comatose states was a fearful thing. One of them went berserk, and it took the doctor and four attendants to calm him down.

George had a tough time getting his pictures. Naturally, we couldn't pose them - we had to sneak up on them.

The second day there, we decided to get some pictures up on the violent male ward. I wanted a shot which would catch all the filthy details of a typical seclusion cell. The doctor didn't like the idea, but we persuaded him we had to have the shot.

Tapscott stood outside the cell, ready to shoot as soon as the door was opened. A number of the violent patients, excited by the strangers, crowded around us, screaming and cursing. It wasn't easy. Tapscott and I were both sweating, and it wasn't from the heat.

When the iron door opened, the patient, a naked, 250-pound giant, made a bee-line for the camera. Down went the camera, followed by Tapscott and Gorman. It took the attendants 15 minutes to subdue the giant. With our hearts joggling around our throats, we kept plugging away until we got our seclusion cell shot.

Taking pictures of the women was most difficult. Some of them went into a frenzy when they saw the camera. When the flash bulb

went off, they would jump up, yelling and screaming. Several of them dashed their heads against the bars. We felt like a couple of heels, but we had to get the job done.

When I started out on the tour, I had made a resolve to eat at least one meal with the patients at each of the hospitals. When I had downed the one at Norman, I wished to God I had never made the resolve. I had some consolation, though -- it stayed down several hours before it came up.

When we finished at Norman, we headed for the extreme northeastern part of the state. We started our northern swing at Vinita's Eastern Oklahoma Hospital. Here we got our first taste of the typically isolated state mental hospital, located far from a large city and desperately cut off, it seemed, from the entire world.

Riding along the northern rim of Oklahoma from Vinita to Enid, we drove through some of the richest farm country in the southwest. A record wheat crop was being harvested, and the land fairly reeked with prosperity and good living. We were a couple of blind voyagers, though - the stench was in our nostrils and the horrors glazed our eyes.

Northern Oklahoma Hospital at Enid housed 1,500 mental defectives. Here our hearts were jerked by several pathetic incidents.

Unlike the women patients at Norman and Vinita, the male defectives at Enid were fascinated with Tapscott's camera. They vied with one another for a chance to carry his packet of bulbs. One handsome boy, about 14 years of age, dogged us for the entire two days of our stay, so we made him our official mascot. When we were about to leave, Tapscott handed him a half-dollar. The boy smiled pleasantly but returned the money. The superintendent explained we had hurt his pride - he had considered it an honor to carry our

equipment.

The night before we left, the 28-piece band, made up entirely of mental defectives and trained by the hospital barber, put on a special concert for us. Outfitted in monogrammed uniforms donated by the townspeople of Enid, they stood proudly upon the bare little stage and played their very hearts out. I looked at Tapscott, who had photographed death for two years in Italy and Germany. The tears were rolling down his cheeks, so I didn't feel so badly about the ones that were rolling down mine.

We then headed for the western panhandle, site of Western Oklahoma Hospital at Fort Supply. For miles and miles, as you ride across this flat country which was ravaged by the dust bowl in the '30's, you search futilely for a single tree.

As we approached the Fort Supply hospital, we thought we saw a mirage. A beautiful row of towering trees, extending for a half-mile on both sides of the road, marched in stately dignity all the way up to the main building. What a welcome sight! "A fine hospital", I thought.

Inside, it turned out to be a witches' brew of jangled minds rattling about in cob-webbed filth and misery. By far the worst hospital in the state, it was probably one of the worst in the country.

Touring the central kitchen where all the food was prepared, I got so mad I turned on the superintendent and let him have it. Foot-long gaps in the floor, broken pipes, 19th century steam kettles, a low, shed-like ceiling which kept out all air - it was beastlier than the Black Hole of Calcutta.

It was one hospital I was eager to get away from. Out there in the vast emptiness of the panhandle, seemingly thousands of miles from a friendly voice or a Christian smile, it seemed the diabolic

creation of a sadistic fiend.

We were a bit relieved as we headed for Taft, mental institution for negroes in the southern part of the state. But we hadn't spent more than five minutes in the hospital before we realized we were in a black inferno.

There I witnessed the most galling thing I had seen on the entire tour - little children, adult mental defectives, epileptics, schizophrenics, and tuberculars, all mixed in the same wards.

Our last stop was at Pauls Valley, where the home for epileptics sat smack-dab in the center of some of the loveliest livestock and farming land in the state - Oklahoma's famed "short grass" country.

The institution was another pit of despair, presided over by one old, very tired doctor. On our tour of the hospital, we had to climb over the prostrate bodies of patients lying about the grounds in convulsive states, unattended by any hospital personnel.

We rode back up from Pauls Valley, neither of us saying a word. When George dropped me off at the house, he asked me when I would need the pictures.

"George, the way I feel right now, I don't care if we ever print 'em," I said. "I can never tell that story, and neither can those damned pictures."

When I got upstairs, my wife let out a yelp.

"What's happened to you?" she cried.

I went over to the mirror and took a look at myself. "As ugly as ever," I thought, "but no radical changes."

She hustled me off to the scales in the bathroom. They registered 170. Now I knew what she meant. I had lost exactly 17 pounds.

I plopped wearily into a chair. The whole thing sat on me like a two-ton incubus. Sunday, my wife and I drove out to Lake Hefner.

I sat on a bench by the lake for four hours, just staring at the water. I suppose the psychiatrists would say I was, subconsciously, trying to clean some of the stuff off of me by projecting myself into the water. Maybe. I was too tired to know.

Monday I came down to the office. I had 10,000 words of notes scrawled on 120 pieces of the filthiest copy paper which ever polluted a respectable city room. All day I worked on an outline for the enormous mass of undigested material.

Tuesday, I started to write. The first few paragraphs went off allright. Then I started to describe the medical staff at Norman, how inadequate it was. But how inadequate was it?

I went over to Harold Johnson.

"Harold, how many doctors ought there to be in a mental hospital which has 3,000 patients?" I asked him.

"How the hell should I know?" he answered. "Don't you?"

"No. I haven't got the slightest idea, and I can't write this damned thing until I find out. How can I judge the Oklahoma hospitals until I know what other hospitals are doing, what standards, if any, there are?"

Harold, a very patient guy, began to get the drift. What started out as a spot article on Norman was now blowing up into a research project of vast proportions. He shook his head wearily.

"Allright, go ahead," he sighed. "Come back and tell me when you have your degree in psychiatry."

For the next two weeks, I boned up on every piece of psychiatric literature I could get hold of. I consulted the bibliography in Dr. Karl Menninger's "Human Mind", went down to the bookstore and picked up seven texts in psychiatry.

I wired the National Committee for Mental Hygiene, the National

Mental Health Foundation, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychoanalytic Association, the Menninger Foundation, and every other outfit in the field. I went down to second-hand bookstores and picked up old issues of "Mental Hygiene" and the "Journal of Psychiatry".

I got together with Dr. Hugh M. Galbraith, the city's top psychiatrist, and we spent hours kicking the problem around. He had spent five years as assistant superintendent of a state mental hospital in New Hampshire, so he gave me plenty of inside dope.

Most of the time, I sat up in the city room picking through the pile of books and magazines in front of me. My fellow reporters would come by the desk, look me over, and shake their heads sadly.

"Too bad, such a nice boy, too," they'd say. "Made a tour of the state mental hospitals and went completely nuts. Thinks he's a psychiatrist now, doing research on the mental abnormalities of an L.C. Smith typewriter."

After two weeks of reading, assembling standards, attempting to psychoanalyze my wife, and driving everyone else crazy, I rolled up my sleeves and tore into the series on Oklahoma's mental institutions.

When I finished the "thing" - we all referred to it then wearily as the "thing" - I lugged the 80 pages of copy over to Harold Johnson. He smiled wanly and pulled out his red pencil.

The next day, when I arrived at the office, there was a note in my mail-box from Harold. It said:

"You've done it, boy."

That was all, but that was plenty.

In the meantime, Tapscott had come through with 45 of the most gruesome pictures you've ever seen. They were plenty rough.

Now, The Daily Oklahoman is a pretty conservative paper, leaning heavily on acceptable matter for family reading. It had long ago acquired the nickname: "The Great Moral Daily". In other words, it is as far from the Hearstian brand of journalism as the president of the Daughters of the American Revolution is from Gypsy Rose Lee.

There was plenty of doubt about the pictures, some of which showed patients grovelling about the floors and wards sans the slightest stitch of clothing.

It was decided to take the pictures to the publisher, E.K. Gaylord, for a final decision.

SECTION 3 - E.K. GAYLORD

The man who picked up those 45 pictures and riffed through them is the most amazing man I've ever met, and probably the most remarkable figure developed in the southwest during the past generation.

At 75, enjoying the mental and physical health of a man of 50, E.K. Gaylord today controls a communications empire embracing The Daily Oklahoman, the Oklahoma City Times, the Farmer-Stockman, a monthly magazine with more than 300,000 circulation, Mistletoe Express Co., the outstanding statewide express service in the country, radio station WKY in Oklahoma City, KLZ in Denver, KVOR in Colorado Springs and, in addition, runs the vast Gaylord Guernsey farms.

He was born near Muscotah, Kansas, on March 5, 1873. His mother was an Edwards of Massachusetts, one branch of whose family tree connects with the Jonathan Edwards line. She and his father, a New Yorker who was a Union Captain in the Civil War, were married just after Appomattox. Young and adventurous, they came west, settling in northeast Kansas.

Young Edward's first six years on the unyielding flat acres of a western Kansas ranch were a kind of tough indoctrination course for a life that was to be intimately tied up with the struggle and strife of the developing southwest.

In 1881, his parents were driven by drouth, grasshoppers, and hard times to Grand Junction, Colorado, where Gaylord senior had a tough time making ends meet.

When he was 11, young Edward started to work grubbing weeds on a truck farm. A few years later, his father was hurt in an accident, so Gaylord left school in his junior year to become the prin-

cipal family breadwinner. He studied nights while working as a jack-of-all trades in a second-hand store.

At 16, he was the de facto skipper of his own business, but he was deeply conscious of his lack of a formal education. He decided to go off to college, though his principal competitor warned him the five years he would spend in college would be wasted - he would better spend them accumulating capital as a businessman.

He arrived in Colorado Springs with $17 in his pocket. The fare home was $19. After a few days in the strange town, he found a boarding house that needed just such services as he could supply. So he became houseman and gardener, exchanging these services for meals. Janitor work and odd jobs provided funds for room rent and general expenses.

He became infected with the fever of newspapering and printer's ink in college, becoming editor-in-chief and joint business manager, with another student, of the college paper.

In his senior year at collage, he joined an older brother in the purchase of the Colorado Springs Telegraph, which the pair bought for $12,000. E.K. borrowed his half, without any collateral, from a Missouri country banker friend whom he had met at the boarding house. The brother ran the paper while E.K. finished his college work and then took off for Cripple Creek where he remained as district court clerk for four years.

Returning to Colorado Springs, he worked on the paper as advertising manager, editorial writer, and telegraph editor. When he had gained sufficient experience, he sold the paper for a tidy profit.

He then jumped to St. Joseph, Missouri, where he took the foundering St. Joe paper and put it on its feet.

Looking around for new fields to pioneer in, he happened one

day to interview the mayor of Chicago, who was passing through St. Joe on his way back from a trip through the southwest. The mayor spoke so glowingly of the opportunities in Oklahoma territory that young E.K. decided to have a look-see.

He made a prospecting trip to Oklahoma City, then a mud-splattered town of 10,000 people, in 1902. He convinced R.E. Stafford, the then principal owner of The Daily Oklahoman, that he could bring ability and financing to the then struggling sheet.

When he took over, the 8-page daily had a puny 3,500 circulation. The entire plant was located in one small room with a flat bed press, two linotypes, a shirt-tail full of type, a pony telegraph report, and a most indifferent system of doing business.

He rolled up his sleeves and started to build a paper and a state. He threw out the old job news department, subscribed for the full leased wire report, added a new perfecting press, stereotyping plant and five linotypes.

Putting out a paper in those rough and tumble days required stamina, a tough hide, and plenty of sheer bravado. E.K., a little over five feet, weighing 120 pounds and peering owlishly from behind large black-rimmed spectacles, was hardly the person to strike terror in the hearts of the lusty pioneers.

Rev. Sam Small, a Methodist preacher in that era, wrote this of Oklahoma City in 1902:

"She was some wide-open town, believe me. The barrooms were as thick, it seemed to me, as in old Kansas City, or as speakeasies in Wichita. Gamblers were the busiest men of the citizenship and red lights were the principal illumination of the nights. Fights among the job-hunting drifters and underworld adventurers were frequent, and shooting scrapes were so often that they soon ceased to

be sensational."

The first editor wrote the following of the paper's problems:

"But, oh boy, what a troublesome kid that paper was. I struck out boldly for single statehood and prohibition. Right there I bit off a couple of wads of bear meat that grew bigger the more I chewed on them. They got me in bad from the jump-off with the strong advocates of a separate state for the Indian territory, and with the liquor people, too.

"Businessmen of the community were largely under the menace of elements and were warned not to advertise in and encourage the Oklahoman. They didn't!"

The week Gaylord took over, there was a cattlemen's convention in Oklahoma City. Some soldiers from the post at Fort Sill were in town, too. During one of the many brawls, a cattleman shot a soldier. Gaylord was downtown that night. He heard about the killing and went out and helped round up the facts.

Next morning, when he looked for his pride and joy in the paper, there wasn't a word about the killing to be found. He went to the shop and raised the roof. The editor said the Chamber of Commerce had called up and asked that nothing be printed.

That gave the Guthrie State Capitol, the Oklahoman's hated rival, a clean beat. Gaylord was furious. However, that same morning, another murder occurred in the alley right outside the Oklahoman office. The new killing gave Gaylord the chance to put out the first Oklahoman extra ever published, with the fresh murder bannered and the army killing decently interred in second place.

But circulation was building very slowly - it had risen but 1,500 to about 5,000 by 1904. The Guthrie State Capitol claimed a circulation of 15,000, and taunted its weaker rival.

A scoop famed in the newspaper history of the southwest then occurred which put the Oklahoman out in front to stay.

In those days, it wasn't customary to keep news wires in operation in the southwest on Sundays. However, Gaylord, expecting a declaration of war between Russia and Japan and, wishing to beat the Guthrie newspaper on the story, decided to try and hold the wire open on Sunday, February 6, 1904. Here's the way he told it many years later:

"I queried the A.P. and was informed that the Sunday service would be free, my only expense being an operator. I called together the telegraph editor, foreman, printers and pressmen and we all stood by. We were barely ready for developments when there came a flash, 'War Declared'.

"The telegraph editor rushed down a banner and the make-up man began making over page one for the big story. In the meantime, we were receiving all other news of the day and soon it appeared that a fire, which had broken out in the docks at Baltimore, was receiving more attention than all other stories combined. So we decided to run the fire story too, and made a one-column head feature of it.

"'Click-click' went the telegraph keys, 'Add Fire --', 'Add War --'.

"We decided the fire story was going over pretty big. So we called it back and made a double-column lead. When we finally staggered to press Monday morning, it was with a complete five-column head story on the Baltimore fire and a two-column head on the war declaration. Our story of the fire was one of the most detailed accounts carried by any Monday morning newspaper in the United States.

"Telephoning Wichita and Guthrie newspaper offices that morning, I learned their plants were dark. So I bundled four boys aboard

a train for Wichita with 2,500 copies of the extra and another quartet was dispatched to Guthrie with 1,500 copies to sell on the streets. I checked our news dealer lists and multiplied the usual order of each by three or four, wiring them that the extra copies were coming. We mailed a free copy to every subscriber."

Gaylord had caught the opposition sleeping, and from then on The Daily Oklahoman, which nearly doubled its circulation as a result of the Baltimore fire scoop, started a breathtaking climb to the top.

Gaylord, a clean but merciless fighter, went after the Guthrie paper. Guthrie was the big city in those days, supremely cocky in the knowledge that it was to become the capitol of the state.

E.K. started out by checking the Guthrie paper's claim to 15,000 readers. He sent investigators to Guthrie and learned it was printing but 6,000 copies. He challenged it through the trade press to present proof of its extravagant claims. He told national advertisers, who were then giving their business to Guthrie, that he would open his books to them for a fair comparison. He pounded away until the Guthrie paper threw in the towel.

He had started to build a paper -- now he wheeled about and started to build a state. The Daily Oklahoman became the leader in the campaign for single statehood. Both Indian and Oklahoma territories wished to retain identity, but the campaign for unity won. Oklahoma entered the union as one state in 1907.

He then embarked on a tireless campaign to move the capitol from Guthrie to Oklahoma City. The tide was turned when an avalanche of petitions, most of them distributed by members of his own circulation department, succeeded in forcing the change.

He then accepted the only public office he had held in 46 years

of ceaseless activity in Oklahoma. He became a member of the building commission set up to erect the state capitol building. In an era of graft and countless charges of corruption, they erected a beautiful three million dollar edifice without the slightest taint of scandal.

Gaylord had been instrumental in unifying a state, in placing its capitol in Oklahoma City, and in building its chief edifice. Now he turned his attention back to his struggling publications empire.

When he bought the Oklahoman, he inherited a sickly farm weekly that was edited almost entirely with shears. After a number of heart-breaking experiments, he finally evolved a tabloid format for it, issued it semi-monthly, named it the "Oklahoma Farmer-Stockman", and put it squarely on its feet.

Then he wheeled about and concentrated on the afternoon newspaper field. The first paper to be published in Oklahoma City after the run of April 22, 1889, which opened the counties of central Oklahoma to settlement, was the Times Journal, which later changed its masthead to the Oklahoma City Times. Through many vicissitudes it managed to live a precarious existence until 1916, when it was purchased by the Oklahoma Publishing Co. Today it is the largest evening paper in the state.

When radio reared its head as a competitor for the advertising dollar, Gaylord purchased WKY, one of the nation's pioneer stations. Today it is an NBC affiliate with one of the most modern lay-outs west of the Mississippi.

One of his greatest business deals was the establishment of Mistletoe Express. When the depression hit in the early '30's, the railroads began to chop off trains with utter indifference to statewide circulation problems. Gaylord decided the company would have

to circulate its own papers. He organized the Mistletoe Express Co., whose fleet of 100 trucks threads the state day and night, carrying the morning and evening papers to the far corners of the commonwealth.

From the establishment of statehood in 1907 right on through the late '30's, the Gaylord papers were involved in some fierce battles, several of which threatened to snuff out their existence.

Gaylord was the dominant force in the struggle which resulted in the impeachment and removal of Gov. J.C. Walton for an attempt at political dictatorship in the turbulent Ku Klux Klan days of 1924.

The Walton episode was in every way comparable to colonial rebellions in the early days of our nationhood. Oklahoma was torn asunder - the right of personal freedom from military control, the right of a free press, the right of the legislature to perform its functions free from executive interference, the right of the public to have its criminals restrained in prison after legal conviction by a jury and sentence by a court - all were challenged by the megalomaniacal Walton.

The writ of habeas corpus was suspended and the press censored. Oklahoma City and Tulsa were bee-hives of armed troops whose presence suspended the operations of the civil authorities. Thousands of armed men, many of them dangerous criminals, operated throughout the state. All this in 1923, in the peaceful era of silent Cal Coolidge!

Gaylord took to the lists against Walton, risking both personal and business destruction. One of the state's ablest historians has written this of Gaylord's role:

"Breaking the power of Walton would have been impossible had it not been for the persistent and constant opposition of E.K. Gaylord....Though frequently urged by other businessmen to cease his

opposition upon the ground that the city would be damaged by a continuation of the fight, he never ceased opposing Walton. For a time, he was practically alone."

During the four years "Alfalfa" Bill Murray was governor, from 1930 to 1934, another furious battle raged. "Alfalfa", an old hand at hot expletives, continually referred to the Gaylord papers publicly as "the twin whores of Fourth and Broadway".

Gaylord ploughed on, lashing out at any interests he thought were interfering with the development of either Oklahoma City or the state. A man of strong opinions, he smashed at his enemies cleanly but ruthlessly.

He got into some bitter battles in the '30's with powerful oil interests who tried to run their big derricks, at the height of the oil boom, into some of the finest residential and business districts of the city.

These interests pictured him as a big oil man, the owner of fabulous producing wells all over the city. They printed maps and distributed them from house to house, showing citizens where the "Gaylord wells" were located.

His answer was a blistering one. He is seldom moved to write an editorial but, when he is, the paper on which it is printed has to be treated with a light coat of asbestos.

In this case, he pointed out, first of all, that he didn't own a single oil well in the city. Pouring it on, he cited the fact top geologists had informed him one of the most potentially productive oil fields was on the site of the Oklahoma Publishing Co. Despite this, he told his detractors, he would not allow one single derrick on his property. Piling fact upon fact, he charged greedy oil operators with no concern for the long-range interests of Oklahoma

City. They threw in the towel.

During the same period, he conducted a powerful campaign against the railroad interests, demanding the removal of unsightly railroad tracks from the center of the business section. He won, and the recovered property became one of the most beautiful civic centers in the country.

In his 70's, he is still in the midst of every battle for civic improvement. Like most Oklahomans, he loves a good battle, but when it is over, he holds no hard feelings.

I found that out soon after I came to Oklahoma. One of my first assignments for the "Times" was to go down and interview "Alfalfa" Bill Murray, then a tired, half-blind old man in his late 70's. The occasion was the publication of his three-volume eccentricity on his role in Oklahoma politics.

During the interview, "Alfalfa" curled the walls of his tiny hotel room with vituperative blasts against the Gaylord empire. After he had blown a number of fiery gusts, I handed him Mr. Gaylord's personal check for a set of the books. Tears flooded the eyes of the old fire-eater. We published a big splash about the book, and Murray sold hundreds of sets on the strength of it.

Always looking forward, Gaylord is impatient to incorporate new ideas, new developments into his horizon. Thirty years ago, while George Gallup was in his teens, Gaylord started readership and opinion surveys. Every year, 1,000 questionnaires were sent to a random list of readers. They weren't asked what they liked, but what they disliked about the paper. Last year, the paper spent $25,000 on the most elaborate readership survey ever conducted by any paper in the country.

New mechanisms fascinate him. He is no longer very much inter-

ested in radio - he is now immersed in television studies. A great believer in aviation, he has done more to bring the industry to Oklahoma than any other man. For four successive years, the National Aviation Clinic was held in Oklahoma City. He has flown to all parts of the world. This June, as eager as a kid, he took off on Braniff's inaugural flight to Peru.

He battles for new ideas. In the fall of 1946, I was covering City Hall when the city was about to lose the national Civil Aeronautics Administration school through indifference and bungling.

At 9 a.m. the Tuesday the fate of the school was to be decided, he came quietly into the City Council chamber and took a seat in the back of the room. After listening patiently for two hours to the young members of the council piddle and paddle about the problem, he asked to be heard.

Speaking in a resonant voice which hit the council members between the eyes, this 73-year-old man asked council members when they were going to realize they were using horse and buggy tactics in an air age. He told them of the potentialities of aviation in such eloquent terms they voted an appropriation for the school five minutes after he had finished.

This was the man, then, who riffed through the 45 pictures taken by George Tapscott. He would decide the fate of my mental hospital series.

I was a little apprehensive on one score. Having lived the life of a pioneer, and naturally having some of the pioneer's psychology about rugged individualism and his coolness toward social pampering, how would Gaylord react to this, a purely social question? He had seen, and participated actively, in the growth of a state which had been built on the survival of the fittest and the

hardiest. There hadn't been time to worry about those who had fallen by the wayside.

His orientation was purely southwestern. Advanced social welfare and psychiatric movements in the east and the midwest were as unfamiliar to him as they were to the average Oklahoman. The main elements in Gaylord's had been physical ones - the structuring of a state and the development of a vast communications empire.

I had not long to worry.

After he had finished looking through the pictures, he turned to his managing editor and asked:

"Were these pictures taken in the mental hospitals?"

"Yessir".

"Well, what are we waiting for? Run 'em!"

SECTION 4 - THE PEOPLE REACT - THEY FORM A MENTAL HYGIENE SOCIETY

After a good deal of editorial discussion and planning, it was decided to hold the mental hospital series until late September, stringing the articles on through October. Mr. Gaylord wanted to slant them for the legislature, and he wanted them to have maximum readership.

The first article took up the entire front page of the feature section on Sunday, September 22. Smack in the center of the page, six columns wide and two thirds of the page deep, was a frightful picture taken in one of the women's wards. Many of my friends told me later they lost their breakfasts a few minutes after looking at that picture.

The banner head, splashed across the top of the page in 72-point type, exclaimed: "MISERY RULES IN STATE SHADOWLAND".

The editor's note tried to warn some of our more squeamish readers. It started off: "This story is not easy or enjoyable reading". In the light of what was to follow, that was the under-statement of the year.

The first article began: "In many ways, the treatment of our mentally ill in Oklahoma today is little better than in the times when they were chained in cages and kennels, whipped regularly at the full of the moon, and hanged as witches."

Three more Sunday full page lay-outs followed, pouring it on mercilessly. Shocking picture after picture smashed at the readers. Weekday articles on the different institutions hammered home the points.

The first article, after cataloguing 10 major and 22 important

additional deficiencies of the mental hospitals, concluded this way:

"The above list of deficiencies merely scratches the surface. It doesn't take into account the many shortcomings of the state board of affairs in its outmoded supervision of all state mental hospitals; it doesn't point out the fact that Oklahoma does not possess one child guidance clinic designed to diagnose and treat the behavior problems of childhood, forerunners of mental breakdown in maturity.

"Further, it doesn't even begin to suggest the frightful squalor these unfortunates live in - beds jammed against one another, holes in the floor, gaping cracks in the walls, long rows of hard, unpainted benches, dirty toilets, dining halls where the food is slopped out by unkempt patient-attendants and, above all, the terrifying atmosphere of hopelessness in institutions where thousands of patients are penned in day after day and night after night, endlessly staring at blank walls."

It is important to remember that this did not appear in "P.M." or "The Daily Worker". It appeared in one of the most conservative papers in the country, and its lashing out at top state officials had a galvanic effect upon practically every reader of The Daily Oklahoman.

The reaction was immediate, staggering, even a little disconcerting. I was then covering City Hall and, having been in Oklahoma City less than a year, was burning the midnight oil to catch up on the intricacies of municipal government and financing.

My phone began ringing day and night. Both my wife and I worked at the paper until late at night - she had just taken over as women's page editor and was blowing and going 12 to 14 hours a day. We tried to get some sleep during the early hours of the morning. No good. People started calling at 8 a.m., telling me what they

thought of the articles, what the paper should do, what the citizens should do, etc.

To cap the climax, the phone rang one morning at 6 a.m. An attendant out at Fort Supply mental hospital wanted to give me more "dirt" on the place. I took some notes, thanked him profusely, and crawled back into bed. My wife just shook her head. We had been married but a few months - she was thinking of writing to Dorothy Dix.

Then the letters started pouring in - over 300 a week. They came from ministers, legislators, educators, former mental patients, relatives of mental patients, and so on.

A woman reader in Woodward wrote:

"I have read the splendid series in The Daily Oklahoman on our mental institutions, but I'm beginning to wonder if your paper is going to quit when the job has just started. (Note: We hadn't had a chance to draw a breath yet)

"You have exposed the condition, but now it is your duty to put pressure on the candidates for governor and the state legislature to see that reforms are carried out at once.

"In last Sunday's Oklahoman, several readers suggested you put the series in pamphlet form and distribute it to every member of the legislature the day the session opens. I have been a reader of your paper for 22 years and, if you do this, it will be the finest service you've ever rendered the people of Oklahoma in all the years of your existence.

"I have a son in one of the mental institutions, and I'd be more than willing to contribute a sizeable sum to defray the cost of printing. I'm sure many other people would make contributions, too. Tell us what the pamphlet will cost, and we citizens of Oklahoma will pay for it."

Can you lick that sort of spirit? We got scores of letters like that, we got poems from former mental patients, we got proposed bills from candidates for the legislature, we got demands for investigations from veterans' and other civic organizations.

The avalanche can be summed up by a quote from a reader in Kingfisher:

"As a reader, I find the inevitable reaction to your articles is horror and a wish to do something about these conditions. But the reader doesn't know just what he can do about it. What can we do NOW?"

That is characteristic of the Oklahoma spirit. To the writer, a native New Yorker who bought a one-way ticket out of there in 1945 to get away from that jaded "we're really so tired, we've seen everything" attitude, Oklahomans will always be a strange and wonderful breed of people. It takes a lot to get them started, but when they've made their minds up, they want to do it in a hurry. They came across the line in '89 to settle the land in a hurry, they built a powerful state in the short space of a generation - they want to do everything, but now.

Top management at the paper decided, with Gaylord waving an impatient go-ahead, to bring the series out in pamphlet form. We printed 10,000 copies. I sat down for several days with a bright girl in our promotion department and we worked out the best mailing list we could - ministers, educators, 2,000 doctors, every legislator and candidate, and every social welfare organization in the state. We ran a plug in the paper, telling readers they could get copies by writing our promotion department.

We got 3,600 requests - count 'em, 3,600 - in the first 11 days after the announcement. Our first printing ran out, so we printed

another 5,000.

The arousement of the people was a sudden and wonderful thing, and I was puzzled for a time until I realized the subject of mental health had, over a period of years, seeped into an unaroused part of their collective conscicusness.

Back in 1907, the year Oklahoma became a state, a little lady named Edith Johnson started working for the fledgling Daily Oklahoman. That was two years before the founding of the National Committee for Mental Hygiene. In those rough and raw days, a woman's place was definitely supposed to be safely in the home.

Not the little lady. Despite the sneers and jeers of many of the raw-boned sons of the southwest, she stalked the town as one of the ace reporters of her day. Her particular beat was crime coverage, and her job on the notoricus Jake Hammond is still one of the finest pieces of reportage in the annals of southwestern journalism.

After the first World War, she moved from the news side to the writing of an editorial column. Alarmed by the lack of interest in social welfare and health problems, characteristic of a pioneer state but disturbing nevertheless, she rolled up her lovely lace sleeves and started spanking her fellow Oklahomans.

Although but five feet high and under a hundred pounds, she lashed out fearlessly. In the early '20's, when venereal disease wasn't spoken of in polite circles, much less mentioned in family newspapers, she wrote a series of columns about cerebral syphilis.

She received a call from a man who said he was coming up to the office to kill her. The man was apprehended before he could carry out his mission - dangerously deranged from the ravages of cerebral syphilis.

She wrote about the Oedipus complex when most Oklahomans thought

it was a swear word. Several of her long-time women friends broke with her for being so frank - after all, a son's attachment to his mother was a sacred thing. Miss Johnson told them if the shoe fit, they could certainly wear it.

Miss Johnson had become interested in psychiatry during World War I. A young army psychiatrist, stationed at Fort Sill in the southern part of the state, read one of her columns and came up to visit her. She became fascinated with the embryonic medical science, and devoted many columns to it.

In the next 30 years, she wrote hundreds of columns about psychiatry and allied subjects, and her teachings sank into the subconscious of thousands of her readers.

When I started my crusade, "Miss Edith" - as she is called by the thousands who know and love her - rolled up her lace sleeves again and pitched right in. Although in her mid-60's, her writings still have the bounce and crusading zeal of a young fire-eater.

Her writings and her personal interest in psychiatry also had a profound influence on Oklahoma's top psychiatrist, hulking, jovial Dr. Hugh M. Galbraith.

Galbraith, a native Michigander, had started up the psychiatric ladder as assistant superintendent of New Hampshire state mental hospital. Later, while on the staff of Bloomingdale Sanitarium, he had been described in William Seabrook's "Asylum" as "kindly, moon-faced Dr. Pascal." He had come to Oklahoma in 1940, seeking new fields to conquer.

A disciple of Freud and an outspoken man, he had shocked many staid ladies' groups with his lectures on sex as a motivating factor in behavior. He was also a fearless critic of those religions which implanted deep guilt complexes in the minds of their followers.

Many groups had tried to silence Galbraith, but to no avail. He tilted many of his most powerful lances at his fellow doctors who had looked the other way while the mental hospitals sank into pits of despair.

When my series appeared, Galbraith called me and told me he would serve in any way he could, and give all the time I thought he should, to fighting the great crusade. He has never let me down, and his courage in fighting the die-hards in his own psychiatric profession had few parallels in the mental health movement.

But now that the people were aroused, we were faced with a major problem. How channel this arousement? How about a mental hygiene society? We had agreed the paper would go all-out in the fight, but we could only do so much. We needed a strong citizens' group to fight alongside of us.

Talking about lifting oneself up by the bootstraps! Checking around, I found Oklahoma was one of three states in the country which had never had a mental hygiene society. Furthermore, we were cut off, deep in the heart of the southwest, from the workings and activities of national organizations in the field. All the big social welfare outfits seemed to be concentrating their energies in the east, the east roughly comprising New York City and Philadelphia. If they went west, they extended a hesitant tentacle as far as Chicago and thought they were in no man's land.

However, I had heard of the National Committee for Mental Hygiene. I wrote them a letter, asking them if we could affiliate with them. I got back a formal communication, full of chaste words of commendation and the statement that the National Committee had not, nor was it contemplating, any state affiliates.

I was pretty discouraged. I was trying to cover City Hall and

keep my mind on the ramifying problems of sewage disposal, zoning ordinances, construction bidding, and so on. But every day the damned phone in the city room would ring off the wall - the good people asking what they could do.

The thing that got me off my fanny and into action was a letter from a reader in El Reno announcing that he had started a Mike Gorman fund for the mental hospitals. He enclosed $11. In the next five days, I got 23 more letters and the fund totalled $115.

I asked my wife what the hell I should do with the money. She's a native Oklahoman with the same hurry-up spirit they all have. She told me to hustle and set up a state organization myself. I argued that I was a reporter, that I couldn't get involved in a civic movement. She said that was an interesting point, but what would the 10,000 sick people in the state hospitals do while I waited for a Sir Galahad to come along and do the job? I got the idea.

I had heard there was a small group of people in Tulsa who had formed a committee to keep mental patients out of jail during the period preceding their committment. On November 21, 1946, I flew over and met with them.

They agreed a state society was needed. One of the committee, the dean of the Tulsa university graduate school, proposed that a series of preliminary meetings be held leading to the formation of a state organization in six to eight months.

I sat there, emitting impolite groans indicating fierce impatience. I had become infected with the Oklahoma "hurry" virus. I told them that the legislature was convening in a month, that we couldn't wait.

The group was finally convinced. A mass meeting was called for December 3 in Oklahoma City's Municipal Auditorium.

We had no time to make any preparations. An hour before the meeting, a group of us - Edith Johnson, Dr. Galbraith, Rev. Walter Gilliam, the Tulsa coterie, and myself - had lunch together in the YWCA cafeteria. We tried to work up a slate of officers, but we didn't know who we could get to accept the presidency. We had been working on Rotary day and night for two weeks - we wanted a good, substantial name - but they were moving very slowly. We finally fixed upon Hugh Davis, a prominent Rotarian and railroad official.

The little theater was packed with ministers, oil men, lawyers, farmers, social workers, etc. Then and there the Oklahoma Committee for Mental Hygiene was born.

Galbraith got Davis to the meeting but Davis, swamped with his many civic activities, didn't want it. So we proceeded to elect him by acclamation. Everything had to be done in a hurry - we had no time for personal feelings.

Since we had no time, nor the money, for a professional fund-raising campaign, we depended on the papers to print an appeal for funds to finance our legislative fight.

In one of the most generous and moving demonstrations I have ever witnessed, $7,000 poured in within two weeks from 2,913 individual contributors. Mind you, each of these people, without one whit of personal solicitation, sat down and sent in money orders or checks. And practically all of them were accompanied by long letters - many of them scrawled in pencil and full of misspelled words - pledging their heartfelt support. In fact, the largest contribution was $100 from the First Baptist church of Okmulgee.

We were in business. We didn't have enough dough for office space, so the Oklahoma State Medical association gave us a big hunk of their conference room to do battle in. We hired an executive

secretary, a gal who resigned her position as society editor of the Tulsa Tribune, and we sat back and waited for the fur to fly.

SECTION 5 - THE SENATE INVESTIGATES; THE LEGISLATURE ACTS

We hadn't long to wait. On December 7, a special senate investigating committee appointed by the senate president went down to Norman, site of the state's biggest mental hospital, to survey the situation. I celebrated my 32nd birthday by going down with them.

There were seven senators and the senate president, who was elected from the district in which the hospital was situated.

Now, none of them had ever studied a mental hospital before. They were oil men, ranchers, farmers, newspaper publishers, and so on. They knew much more about Bang's disease in cattle than about mental disease in humans.

The assistant superintendent, knowing of their deep interest in farms, spent two precious hours showing them the hospital farm and dairy. About 11:30 a.m., I testily suggested there were some human beings in the hospital, too.

I requested the assistant superintendent to take them into the "cafeteria" where the chronic women patients ate. That was the place I had been in on the first day of my tour, a low-ceilinged, foul-smelling hall where the attendants threw the food at 500 patients jammed in so close together they had to hold their elbows close in to their sides as they ate. Deteriorated patients who could use only a spoon ate next to acutely ill mental patients with sensitive table manners.

Two of the senators couldn't take it. They rushed out. The others stood, looking as though they were riveted to the floor.

When the group came out, the assistant superintendent suggested lunch. There was a deadly, green silence.

After lunch, I suggested the group visit some of the wards. One of the senators, pleading a previous engagement, excused himself.

As we were walking along the grounds toward the buildings, the assistant superintendent would stop every now and then and greet a patient. The senators would back off a few feet and gape. A number of the patients he greeted were addressed as "Doctor." This puzzled one of the senators, who asked the assistant superintendent why he was humoring the patients by calling them "Doctor".

"But they are doctors," he replied quietly. "We have a number of doctors here, most of them in their 50's and 60's, who broke down from over-work during the war period."

The senator who had asked the question looked down at his feet. His fellow senators looked very thoughtful.

We started in the women's buildings. After we had viewed the downstairs ward in one of the buildings, I suggested we go upstairs and look at some of the cells in which violent patients were confined. The group trudged along. The superintendent opened several of the cells. I went in with him, but the senators stayed at a safe distance.

The senators were about ready to leave the secluded block when the last cell was opened.

The confined woman, gray-haired and dignified in appearance despite her dishevelled clothing, came out over the cell threshold and looked thoughtfully at the group. She finally riveted her gaze on one of the senators. He became increasingly uncomfortable and started to leave. All of a sudden she blurted out:

"Senator ----!"

The senator whose name she called jumped as though he'd been shot. The other senators looked aghast at the thought these people had a memory.

She was a highly excitable, manic patient. She rushed up to the senator and pumped his reluctant hand. I never saw a more unbelieving look on a human being. He shook his head slowly, painfully.

She told him how many times she had voted for him. She talked of her brother who was a doctor, of another brother who was a lawyer. She asked the senator how they were.

"They were all right," he guessed. He took out a handkerchief and mopped his brow.

As we walked away from the secluded cells, the senator mumbled in a low, shaky voice:

"My God! Dear God in Heaven."

It wasn't long before these legislators, who had probably started the tour with the prevalent conception mental patients spent their entire time throwing golf balls or rocks at one another, were disabused of the idea.

We went into the ward building for war veterans. One of the patients, dressed in a natty blue suit, had a copy of "Time" in one pocket and a copy of The Daily Oklahoman in the other. Again the unbelieving looks. "You mean these patients can read?" they seemed to say.

One of the senators suddenly recognized the man in the blue suit. He pulled me aside and asked me if it wasn't "so-and-so, one of the finest newspaper reporters in the state in his prime".

I said it was, and took the senator over and introduced him to the reporter. They launched into a 20-minute political conversation while the other senators stood around and gaped.

That group of legislators had a few new ideas when they went home that night. I'll wager a bet, though, they didn't have much gusto for that old-fashioned southern fried chicken wifey had whipped

up for them.

But all this was really only the calm leading up to the storm of the legislative session.

The legislature hadn't convened a week when the skillet began to broil. The Oklahoma Committee for Mental Hygiene, seeking guidance in its legislative fight, brought Justin G. Reese, chief field worker of the National Committee for Mental Hygiene, down for a week's speaking tour.

Reese had worked for two years as an attendant in the Ohio Mental hospitals during the war. His investigative work had done much to spur the Ohio reform movement in 1945.

A fighter blessed with a fiery eloquence, he charged in his first speech that dogs were receiving better care than the patients in Oklahoma's mental institutions.

That did it. Sen. Louis Ritzhaupt of Guthrie, only doctor in the senate and a man given to flowery speeches about the beauties and glories of Oklahoma, got up on his hind legs and yelped.

Denouncing Reese as "a paid agent sent here to criticize Oklahoma institutions", Ritzhaupt thundered:

"I think it is time we, as members of the senate, served notice that our institutions are as good as will be found anywhere in the world."

He denounced the Oklahoma Committee for attempting to "give mental delinquents over-stuffed furniture and fancy curtains when they cannot be held responsible for the damage that is likely to result."

Governor Roy Turner, who had just been in office two days, got a quick and fiery baptism. In his inaugural message to the legislature, he had spoken about the legislators not being magicians in

setting up a mental reform program.

Reese came right back.

"The Governor is a little mixed up," he said. "It's not magic that's needed - it's money. For years, Oklahoma has treated the state institutions as though they were places of magic, able by some sleight-of-hand to take care of 10,000 mental patients with funds which wouldn't care decently for 1,000."

For a week, charges and counter-charges flew fast and thick. Ritzhaupt roared that "an untrue picture of these institutions has been painted in the newspapers". He drew out the heavy editorial artillery of The Daily Oklahoman.

"Sen. Ritzhaupt's statement that Oklahoma's institutions are 'among the best in the world' is a little mystifying," one editorial writer replied. "To our knowledge, there has never been any survey of mental institutions in all parts of the world. It is hoped, then, that the senator is basing his statement upon solid fact - that he has personally toured mental institutions the world over and is fairly bursting with information."

Reese, who never pronounced Ritzhaupt's name correctly (he said it was a psychological block) poured flames on the fire by challenging the good senator to a debate on conditions in the mental institutions at a mass meeting. Ritzhaupt refused to debate, and his refusal was splashed across the front page of the morning paper.

That pretty much quieted the senator down - for a while, at least. The legislature started hearings on the budgets for the mental hospitals. The nightly sessions, usually quiet hearings closed to the public at which the state hospital superintendents presented their estimates and crawled meekly back to their hospitals to await a legislative crumb, were jam-packed with interested citizens.

SECTION 6 - I GO TO COLORADO

In the meantime, Carl Stuart, managing editor of The Daily Oklahoman, was carefully planning the paper's strategy during the legislative session. He wanted to run a series on what some other state was doing in the way of decent care for the mentally ill. He asked me what states were doing a good job. I showed him a list which rated New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Illinois up at the top.

He looked it over thoughtfully.

"No, Mike, that won't do," he said. "We've got to get a state which is not only comparable to ours in population and finances, but which is known to Oklahomans. I don't want the old outcry about the east having several centuries and accumulated wealth in their favor to boomerang against us."

We combed a little further, and hit upon Colorado. I was smuggled off to Colorado to do a series.

I spent a wonderfully instructive week there, visiting both the Psychopathic Hospital at Denver and the big state hospital at Pueblo.

Dr. Franklin Ebaugh, director of Colorado Psychopathic, is a lovable, absent-minded little guy who has made a host of friends in high political places in his 25 years in Colorado.

He had a wonderful story to tell. His hospital had been established by a four-to-one popular vote back in 1925, at a time when mental illness was something you didn't talk about and when practically every state in the country shunted its "insane" behind strong walls and barred windows.

He was high on full release of all a patient's repressions. Down in the game room, he had placed a dart board covered with a picture of himself.

"During the first few weeks the patients are here, most of them think I'm a direct descendant of the devil," he said laughingly. "I let them take out their contempt on the dart board."

There was a great lesson for Oklahoma in Ebaugh's work. He had been a pioneer in smashing down the artificial distinctions between physical and mental illnesses. He had a full-time psychiatrist working in practically every major department of Colorado General Hospital.

I started off my series on Ebaugh's work with a quote from one of his writings:

"We feel that the psychopathic hospital movement is the natural outcome of many years of striving and earnest effort to place mental disorders on the same basis as physical disorders. We are approaching the time when general hospitals with their splendid delivery rooms, solaria for the tuberculous, and modern facilities of all types will also have provisions for the adequate care and treatment of mental patients."

I pulled a fast one here. I pointed out, at the end of the article, that the above statement had been written in June, 1925! Oklahomans who were fighting introduction of psychiatric units into general hospitals blushed so furiously I felt sorry for them.

After finishing up with Ebaugh, I journeyed down to Pueblo to study the big Colorado state institution which housed 5,000 patients.

There I bounced into the most colorful state hospital superintendent in the country, barring none.

Dr. Felix Zimmerman became head of Colorado State Hospital in

1928 at the tender age of 34. Because most mental hospital superintendants in the country are in their 60's and 70's, he soon became known as the "boy superintendent".

He fell heir to an institution even worse than any of the Oklahoma mental hospitals. But he had one tremendous asset, and in telling of it I poured it on the Oklahoma mental superintendents. Zimmerman wasn't afraid of the state legislature.

In 1929, one year after he had taken over, the legislature met and did what it had always done with the mental budget - chopped it to pieces. Zimmerman rushed up to Denver and amazed the legislature by throwing the keys to the hospital in their stupefied faces.

"I was kind of afraid they'd take me up on it, but I really meant it," Zimmerman told me, smiling as he looked back upon the incident. "I told them I was a psychiatrist, and my job was to take care of those sick people. If they didn't give me the money to do the proper job, they could have the keys and run the place themselves."

The legislature backed down and restored the slashes. Since then, Zimmerman has waved the keys in front of the legislature innumerable times, but they've never called him on it.

He was a new breed of hospital superintendent. He did things which shocked the old-line boys. Feeling the hospital was cut off from the community, he got the state to provide liberal sums so the employees could buy homes in Pueblo. He encouraged them to join all the civic clubs, take an active part in the community. All his doctors have to join at least one club in town, and not the country club.

Instead of hiding his institution behind walls of isolation, he encouraged the public to come out and visit his place. Every Sunday was open house. He's had reporters writing stuff about his hospital for 20 years. When exposes on state mental hospitals

started breaking out all over the country, he smilingly thumbed through six fat scrapbooks of pictures and texts culled from national magazines and state papers.

Whenever he ran into a shortage of key personnel, he started a school to train them. When he ran desperately short of attendants, he started one of the first attendant schools in the country. A few years ago, he couldn't hire enough cooks. In July, 1944, he opened the first dietetics school ever approved by the American Dietetic Association in a mental hospital. And so on.

He is a delightful character, with a sense of humor seldom found in his back-breaking profession. Bothered with a kidney ailment the last few years, he said he was through as an efficient superintendent.

"In my prime, I spent months during every legislative session drinking and partying with the legislators. It paid off ten-fold in increased legislative appropriations. But my kidneys won't stand it any more. I have, however, set up one prime requisite for my successor - he must have a strong pair of kidneys."

Zimmerman made wonderful copy. I wound up my series on him with this quote, which rocked the Oklahoma hospital superintendents right back on their Milquetoastish heels:

"I cannot understand the hands-off attitude so prevalent among state mental institution heads," he said. "Their holier-than-thou pose can be summed up in the words: 'I am a psychiatrist, I cannot be bothered with sordid details like getting enough money to run my institution decently'.

"If they are such competent psychiatrists, why don't they practice some of their psychiatric techniques on the legislators? Instead, most of them, having a psychotic fear of legislators, hide

behide their walls of isolation, shedding crocodile tears about the neglect they bring upon themselves."

Mighty strong words, but badly needed. After reading them, several of the Oklahoma mental superintendents gained enough courage to do some pretty fair talking back to the house-senate appropriations committee. One night at a legislative hearing, Dr. Felix Adams, for 35 years superintendent of the Vinita hospital, and Dr. D.W. Griffin, superintendent for 47 years at Central State, scared the demagoguery out of a number of representatives by raising their voices in angry denunciations of the rotten pay given attendants. Old-time legislators shook their heads in bewilderment - they hadn't heard such disrespectful talk in an age of filibusters.

When I had returned from Colorado, I beat out the series in a hurry. I urged Stuart to publish it at once, but he shook me off. He put it in his drawer for what he termed a "strategic moment".

When Ritzhaupt started to pop off, Stuart saw the opportunity. At the bottom of a story of one of Ritzhaupt's speeches in which he proclaimed Oklahoma mental institutions the finest in the world, Stuart dropped a come-on sentence asking readers to turn to page 10 and find out what comparatively good mental institutions were like.

Thus the Colorado series, 15,000 words of copy, was launched. It renewed lagging interest in the legislative hearings on the mental bills. We got another flood of letters, asking us to reprint this one as a series, too. We printed 10,000 pamphlets again, and soon were out of copies. We attached three powerful editorials to the pamphlet, the sum of which was an aggressive call upon the legislature to "blueprint a realistic attack upon the state's number one health problem - mental illness".

We decided to dramatize the advent of the pamphlet. I took a

photographer and went out to the legislature to distribute a copy of the pamphlet, which we had entitled "Let There Be Light", to each representative.

We wanted to pose a shot of one of the senators receiving the pamphlet from me. A number of them shied away. It looked like too hot a potato. They didn't want to be seen holding the "thing".

I finally persuaded the president pro tempore, Sen. James C. Nance, to pose with the "thing". He hadn't read the hot editorials yet, so he smiled and we published the picture.

SECTION 7 - WE UNCOVER A COUPLE OF BEATINGS

During March, 1947, the campaign lagged. A long, 46-page mental health bill, repealing Oklahoma's outmoded 1917 Lunacy Law, had been drawn up in December, 1946. It established enlightened commitment procedures, removed the state mental institutions from politics by setting up a medically-controlled mental health board, provided for the appointment of a psychiatric director of the state's seven mental hospitals, and opened the way for a broad clinical and preventive program.

The bill ran into all sorts of obstacles. It was so long, and so full of psychiatric terminology, that many legislators were actually afraid of it. It was bounced from committee to committee. We were trying to push hearings on it, but were getting nowhere fast.

We held meetings until three and four o'clock in the morning, going down the list of legislators again and again scouring for additional support. My bride of a few months was sorely tried. After the seemingly endless meetings, she and I would pace the floor of our small apartment until dawn. Then I would go in and shower and go on to the state capitol to cover the day's sessions.

Several times, she made up her mind to pull me out of the whole thing. I had a nervous stomach, aggravated by four years in the army, and for a week at a time I could hold nothing but fruit juices. After a trying day covering the legislature, I would come home, drink a glass of orange juice, and start wearing out the rug.

During this period, a man named Johannes Brahms was the one who saved me from becoming a mental patient. Over and over again, at any hour of the morning, I would play one of his symphonies or

sonatas. I don't have to be told about the efficacy of musical therapy, of its cathartic value. Listening to Brahms, I would be released for a few blessed hours, and ready for the next day's snarling.

Just then, when things looked darkest, two sensational developments occurred.

I was pacing the floor at home Sunday night, March 10, cursing the fate that had made me a newspaper reporter, when the phone rang. It was an anonymous tip from a man, whose name I don't know to this day, reporting the severe beating of an elderly patient at Central State hospital.

The old man's daughter would never have known of the beating had she not gone down to visit her father that Sunday. When she walked into the ward where they kept her father, and saw the large bruises on his face and neck, she bundled him up and took him home.

I rushed out to the daughter's home, took one look at the old man, and high-tailed it for Norman, 20 miles south of Oklahoma City.

Officials were thunder-struck when I walked into the main building at Norman at 8 p.m. Sunday. After recovering from their initial shock, they pieced out a narrative about the old man, who was 89, being a violent patient who had to be continually restrained. When they had completed their verbal fantasy, I asked to talk to the attendants who had beaten the old man.

Then it all came out. They admitted the beating had been administered by two patients who were working as attendants on the ward. Officials said it would do no good to talk to the patient-attendants. I said I wasn't going to leave the hospital until I talked to them.

The two patient-attendants were brought in. My heart sank. They were both terribly frightened. One of them cried during the

entire interview.

The elder of the two was a paranoid praecox, a patient suffering from a split personality with dangerous delusions. Yet he had been in charge of a ward at night for the past 18 months!

He said he had tried to choke the 89-year-old man because he was making a noise. The other attendant, a powerfully built low-grade moron who came from one of the finest families in Oklahoma, admitted having struck the old man a number of times.

I had run into hundreds of shocking situations in a year of covering the mental hospitals, but this was by far the worst. I checked and found there were 60 patients acting in similar capacities as ward attendants at the Norman hospital.

The assistant superintendent admitted that, a few nights before, a patient-employee had been badly beaten by one of the patients in his charge. Several months before, another patient working as an attendant was so badly beaten by his sick charges he had required 14 stitches in his head.

After a sleepless night, one when not even Brahms could supply surcease, I came down to the office and told Stuart what had happened. He told me to get a photographer and go out and get some pictures of the old man who had been beaten.

That's something I'll never do again. The old man was lying on a couch, moaning and crying, when we got there. As we talked to the daughter, the old man several times raised himself slightly off the pillow and mumbled: "Those poor old fellers. Those poor sick fellers."

The daughter and I got him to his feet. As I started to pull up his shirt to take a look at one of the bruises, he pulled away and let out a horrible moan. His daughter tried to soothe him, ex-

plaining to us that, since the beating, he thought anyone who came near him wanted to work him over. We finally got our pictures and left.

That was the toughest story I've ever written. I felt like a damned fool, sitting there in the middle of the city room, the tears pouring down my face as I angrily thrashed my typewriter. I was sorry for the old man, sorrier for the poor patient-attendants who knew not what they did, and sorriest of all for all of us who had let horrible things like this come to pass.

Our 200,000 readers got a helluva shock when they picked up their papers the next morning. I just hope too many of them hadn't eaten a hearty breakfast.

Splashed across the center of page one, two columns wide and six inches deep, was a gruesome close-up of the old man's beaten face. On page 2, where the story ran for three more columns, there was an ugly picture of his battered right hip. Not exactly the best kind of family reading.

We had just started getting a flood of reactions on the Norman story when I got a call from the state commissioner of charities and corrections. He told me he was leaving for Fort Supply mental hospital, out in the western panhandle, to investigate the death of a mental patient there. He said reports reaching him indicated the patient had been beaten to death by a group of attendants.

The next few days were hysterical ones. Little could be done in prosecution of the Norman case, since the patient-attendants could not be held legally responsible. But the Fort Supply case, which had started out less spectacularly, soon became the most explosive one.

The superintendent at Fort Supply, who has since resigned, at

first denied the beatings in a phone conversation with me. He said the patient had been badly beaten when he came to the hospital from the county jail.

A little checking soon exploded that one. Both Enid police officers who had taken the man to the hospital said there were no bruises on him when he was admitted. I called the superintendent again. He changed his mind. Yes, there had been a fracas, but the patient had been very violent.

The heat was on. The Oklahoma Committee for Mental Hygiene issued a smashing statement demanding full prosecution for the attendants in the Fort Supply beating.

In the meantime, the patient had been buried. I called the superintendent again. Had there been an autopsy before burial? He said there hadn't. Why not? Well, he hadn't thought it was necessary.

Bang! Now we really went to town. I called the chairman of the board of affairs, who had charge of the mental institutions. How about an autopsy? He said no money was provided for such a contingency. I suggested, politely and nicely, that it might be wise to find some money for one.

They found some money. They dug the body up and brought it into St. Anthony's hospital in Oklahoma City. Just three of us witnessed the autopsy - the chairman of the board of affairs, an honest and sincere official who wanted to see justice done; the Garfield county attorney, there to protect the interests of the family, and your humble reporter.

The pathologist's report was somewhat of a surprise. Although the patient had a tremendous three-inch bruise on his stomach and countless bruises all over his body, the report said "the patient died of self-inflicted violence".

That "self-inflicted violence" phrase didn't sit well, either with the Oklahoma Committee or the Garfield county attorney. They demanded that the Woodward county attorney, who had jurisdiction over the case because the hospital was in his county, prosecute immediately.

I called the Woodward county attorney. He said he would not prosecute, that all of us were trying to persecute the Fort Supply superintendent. He said the superintendent was a fine man - he had known him for 25 years.

The state, pushed by the chairman of the board of affairs and the state commissioner of charities and corrections, both of whom were determined to get to the bottom of the mess, requested a coroner's inquest.

It was held in Enid a few days later. Despite the "self-inflicted violence" report of the pathologist, the jury declared unequivocally that "the patient had died of violent means at the hands of an instrument or instruments unknown".

SECTION 8 - WE GET A DYNAMIC EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Heightened public interest in the beatings hit the legislature with terrific impact. On the Wednesday both beatings were splashed across the front page of The Daily Oklahoman, the legislature was in a turmoil unusual even for an Oklahoma legislature.

Most of the senators and representatives rose in righteous wrath to denounce the foul blot upon Oklahoma's fair name.

Rep. John T. Levergood, Shawnee, proposed an amendment to the mental health act making it a felony instead of a misdemeanor for an attendant to abuse a patient in a mental institution. It set a penalty of a five-year prison term, a $500 fine, or both, for an attendant guilty of such a felony. It made any superintendent or psychiatrist who aided or abetted such practice equally liable to prosecution. Very strong medicine, but the legislature was up in arms, and the amendment was later incorporated in the model mental health act.

The amendment precipitated a fierce debate. The redoubtable Sen. Ritzhaupt, who a few months before had declared Oklahoma's mental institutions among the finest in the world, got up on the senate floor and minimized the whole thing. He said beatings like those at Fort Supply and Norman were a common occurence in every mental institution.

The roof fell in on Sen. Ritzhaupt. Dr. Hugh Galbraith, the state's leading psychiatrist, spanked him hard.

"These beatings have occurred, and will continue to occur, as long as the indefensible practice of using mentally sick patients as attendants is continued," Dr. Galbraith said in a public statement.

Joseph K. Peaslee, newly chosen executive secretary of the Okla-

homa Committee for Mental Hygiene, really lit into Ritzhaupt.

Peaslee is one of the most remarkable men in a movement more replete with "characters" than a DeMille movie.

After majoring in animal husbandry at the University of Maryland, Peaslee suddenly switched his interest to the human species and studied for the ministry. He became a Lutheran minister with a parish in Baltimore. His parish was in one of the city's underprivileged sections, and he was continually swamped with the personal and social problems of his parishoners.

He decided to study psychology as an aid to him in his religious counseling. He went back to the University of Maryland and there ran into Dr. Bill Lemmon, a Ph.D. in his late twenties who was an ardent partisan of a dynamic clinical psychology.

A few months later, Lemmon told Peaslee he had an offer to join the psychology department of the University of Oklahoma. Peaslee bid his parishoners farewell and joined Lemmon in Oklahoma. He spent a year counseling veterans in the university's guidance bureau, then gave it up because he had discovered that most of the veterans' neuroses stemmed from childhood maladjustments. What good was he doing, he asked himself, talking to people whose behavior disorders were, in many cases, not amenable to treatment?

He decided he wanted to work with children of school age. But where could he go? Not only was Oklahoma without a single mental clinic - it didn't have a single psychological counseling program in any of the hundreds of schools in the state.

That didn't stop Peaslee. He was living then in Midwest City, a wartime boom town that had sprung up eight miles south of Oklahoma City. He went to the superintendent of schools and told him he wanted to start a psychological counseling program for the children.

The superintendent thought it a fine idea, and Peaslee started the first program of its kind in the state of Oklahoma.

But after a year of this, Peaslee wanted to branch out further. His work was severly handicapped because there were no mental hygiene clinics or social agencies which he could call upon for referral. He realized he must help build up a statewide program for better mental health facilities.

I ran into him one day out at the legislature, or rather, he ran into me. In all the time I have known him, he has kept running 16 to 18 hours a day. Only 31, handsome - curly blond hair and a movie star's smile - he is possessed of the energy of ten men.

At the time I crossed his path, he was out putting the screws on a couple of legislators to get them behind the mental health act. I watched him in action for 15 minutes, then walked up and introduced myself. I asked him how come he was out at the capitol working on the legislators - who had hired him?

"Nobody," he replied. "I just think the mental health act is a darned good bill."

From that day on, I wanted that boy to become executive secretary of the Oklahoma Committee for Mental Hygiene. But I had plenty of obstacles. The gal we had originally hired for the job was floundering around - she had no background in psychology and was a poor speaker. But she had built up her political fences and was starting to throw her weight around.

The wedge I was hunting for finally opened up. One of her ardent supporters had been the committee vice-president, a dynamic female from Tulsa. In fact, the dynamic female had proposed the gal for the job.

They fell out over an accounting of committee moneys, the claws

started to fly, and I saw the chance. We got the gal out, and I started to push the candidacy of Peaslee.

I hadn't seen Peaslee in a couple of weeks, so I called him at his home. He wasn't there. His landlady said he had gone back to Maryland - he was getting married and was going to accept a teaching position with the University of Maryland.

He couldn't do this to me! I sent a wire, telling him I wanted him to come back. He wired back regrets. Maryland was his home and, besides, he was married now - he needed a good, steady job.

When I got the wire, I picked up the phone and called him. I levelled with him. I said we couldn't give him a contract, we had only $300 in the treasury, and we'd probably fold up sooner or later. But we needed him badly. He asked me if I realized what I was asking him to do. I said I did, and that I'd regard him as a deserter if he didn't return to Oklahoma at once. He said he'd talk it over with his wife, but he knew what she'd say.

Three days later, the phone rang at 8 a.m. I got up, cursing and swearing. It was Peaslee! He was back in Oklahoma. He didn't have an apartment, he didn't even have a place to park his bags, but he was going right out to the capitol.

He came out to the house. He told me not to worry about salary. He said one of his hobbies was raising champion Boxers - he hated to sell them but he would if we didn't have enough money to pay him.

But to come back to Peaslee and Ritzhaupt. In the month he had been with us, Peaslee had been watching Ritzhaupt very closely. You always get the impression Peaslee is a very naive guy - he's got a boyish smile and his talk stems from the ministry.

Not so. Peaslee had built up a cute little file on Ritzhaupt. When the honorable senator minimized the beatings, Peaslee let go

with fire and brimstone. And, don't forget, he was attacking a fairly sacred cow. Ritzhaupt, the only doctor in the senate, had been in the legislature 20 years and was a prominent aspirant for the governorship at various times in his career.

The attack on Ritzhaupt seemed to galvanize the legislature. Hearings were finally scheduled on the mental health act, and we all breathed a temporary sigh of relief.

SECTION 9 - A SHOOTING AND SEVERAL MINOR CRISES

Our sigh was a short-lived one. The hearings bogged down in complex discussions of proper psychiatric treatment and the splitting of legal follicles over the involved committment sections of the mental health act.

March ran out, and April whipped in. Still the great bog-down. And to further foul matters up, some of the legislators were now getting their axes out to go to work on the greatly enlarged appropriations scheduled for the mental hospitals.

On April 8, the senate appropriations committee whacked $173,000 off the salary budget at the Norman mental hospital. It cut the heart out of our reform movement at the state's biggest hospital. I was deeply shocked and a little frightened. I had been confident that, because of the tremendous public arousement over the mental hospital situation, the legislature wouldn't dare make a cut. I was wrong - it was the first of a nasty series of shocks I was to get.

We raised up on our hind-legs and howled. Governor Turner and W. Russell Borgman, chairman of the board of affairs, howled with us. Both wealthy men, and both without an ounce of political ambition, they were becoming increasingly interested in the success of our movement.

"If the contemplated cut of $173,000 in the salary budget at Norman's Central State hospital goes through, we might as well put a padlock on the main gate and close the institution," Borgman said in a public statement.

But we had to get some public pressure, and quick. The State Federation of Women's Clubs was holding its convention in Oklahoma City

at the time, but I didn't connect it up with the protest idea until my wife suggested we get them behind us.

I was bogged down at the capitol, so my wife took over. She rushed down to the Skirvin Hotel and got hold of her mother, who was a district president and one of the big powers. Her mother explained that the convention sessions were all wrapped up - the gals were ready to go home. My wife poured it on. My mother-in-law, quick to see the light, went into action.

She rounded up the members of the executive board. Peaslee rushed down and gave them 10 minutes of glandular persuasion. They passed a hot resolution, demanding that the cuts be restored. They sent wires to the Governor and every key legislator. The most powerful women's organization in the state, with 7,000 members, their word was mighty. The budget cutters began to weaken.

Borgman then backed up his original protest statement by telling the legislature several doctors at Norman would quit if the cuts went through. Strong talk, and some strong pressure from the women, but put together it did the job. The cuts were restored.

One bright ray of accomplishment shone through in the April gloom. While the legislature was fiddling and faddling around, the good people of Oklahoma had been pushing forward the fight on many fronts.

From the first, the ministers had taken up the cause. Many of them in their early 30's, firmly convinced of the need for close cooperation between religion and psychiatry, they called from the pulpits for their brethren to enlist in the fight. And the good people did act.

Up in the northern part of the state, in the thriving city of Enid, was located the state hospital for mental defectives. It had

been a neglected stepchild of many successive legislatures, with the result the patients there had no recreational equipment whatsoever.

The young businessmen of the town rolled up their sleeves and went to work. The American Business Club, composed of some of the town's leading executives, sent out 2,000 letters, each enclosing a dollar bill. They asked recipients to return as much as they could afford to help the hospital.

The response was amazing. They got a 94 percent return, with over 1,800 letters bringing them in $6,300. A majority of the letters, from the hundreds of farm people in the area, were scrawled in pencil.

It seemed always to go this way during the campaign. Whenever we hit a particularly low spot, the good people of the earth would come through and do something which renewed our faith and strength.

We were beginning to get awfully worried about the legislature. We weren't worried much about our bill incorporating doubled appropriations for the mental hospitals, although we found out later we should have been. But the legislative session was drawing to a close, and we still didn't have our mental health bill out on the senate floor.

The legislature began meeting far into the night, and I began to pace the legislative floor instead of my apartment floor. Every time we'd get an agreement from the senate leaders to bring the bill up, a tornado or something equally devastating would occur.

Finally, during the last week in April, Sen. Perry Porter, Miami, floor leader and a supporter of the bill, said he'd bring it up on Tuesday morning.

I was in the hall outside the senate chamber about noon Tuesday, talking to several senators about you-know-what. I had just

started a sentence when one of the pages came tearing out of the chamber.

"Senator Tom Anglin's been shot!" he screamed. "He's lying on the floor."

We tore into the senate chamber. Anglin, shot in the back, was sprawled on the floor in front of the senate president's rostrum.

Rep. Jimmie Scott, reputedly a close friend of Anglin's but incensed over the fact Anglin was handling Mrs. Scott's divorce proceedings, had marched into the senate chamber brandishing a pistol. He had come through the back door of the chamber, walked down its entire length, and passed in front of the press table before firing. As fate would have it, not one of the eight reporters covering the legislature was at the table when Scott passed. We all had lengthy explanations which we later gave - upon request.

Veteran statehouse reporters regarded the incident as not too unusual. They had covered some of the wild sessions in the formative years after statehood, when a legislator would no more think of coming into the chamber without a pistol than without his pants.

I admitted to thorough amazement, not so much at the shooting itself, but at the fact that Sen. Anglin, the shotee, was armed himself and fired back at his assailant. I asked old-timers how come Anglin was armed. They explained, as they would to a not very bright child who just didn't understand things, that the good senator was a veteran of many Oklahoma legislative sessions.

Of course, chances of getting our mental health act up for action that day were shot, too. The next morning, I sidled up to Sen. Jim Nance, senate president pro tempore, and attempted to make with the propaganda again. I was cut very short.

Late the night before, Sen. Nance had been routed out of bed at an ungodly hour by a long distance call. The operator said Lon-

don was calling. The senator, in no mood for jokes, hung up.

A few minutes later, the phone rang again. The operator insisted. Nance listened. The voice at the other end of the line was that of a reporter on the august "London Times". He wanted to know what press agent had dreamed up that wonderful shooting on the Oklahoma senate floor.

"Press agent stunt!" Nance screamed, making his voice heard throughout the United Kingdom.

"Quite," said the reporter. "You know, the musical comedy 'Oklahoma!' opened here last night, and that boy will certainly get it on the front page with that shooting yarn."

I stayed away from the senator for a couple of days.

Finally, on Thursday afternoon, Sen. Porter brought the bill up on the floor. I sat biting my nails at the press table. I was at the front end of the table, about three feet from, and facing, the desk of Sen. Ritzhaupt. I wanted to put the "voodoo" on him.

As soon as the bill had been formally placed on the floor, Ritzhaupt leaped to his feet. A powerful speaker, he began to tear the bill to pieces. Liberally dosing his speech with "neuropsychiatric", "psychopathic", "stuporous schizoid", and so on, he had his fellow senators on the ropes by the time he finished his long harangue.

It looked awfully bad. Several senators got up to defend the bill, but their unfamiliarity with its psychiatric provisions doomed their efforts.

Ritzhaupt kept introducing crippling amendments, walking and crowing around the floor like a cocky bantam rooster. Dr. Galbraith, who said he'd give $1,000 for an opportunity to psychoanalyze Ritzhaupt, found it significant that Ritzhaupt's major hobby was the raising of cocky roosters.

I was just thinking of how I was going to leave Oklahoma - by train or plane - when the senate president recognized Sen. Fred Chapman of Ardmore. Chapman is a burly millionaire from the rich farmlands of southern Oklahoma. Plain-spoken, friendly, without much formal education, he is as honest as the day is long.

Chapman started to answer Ritzhaupt. He sounded all right until he hit the word "psychiatric". He bucked it, he bronced it, he tried to get over it, but he couldn't make it. His fellow senators sweated with him. After one last crack at it, he tossed it aside.

"Mebbe I can't pronounce the danged word," he bellowed. "But I know in my heart this is a good bill. I have seen conditions in these hospitals. My constituents want this bill, the people of this state want it, and everyone tells me it'll help the poor sick people in these institutions. Dang it, lets cut out fiddling around and pass it!"

I was in a frenzy of frustration during the debate. I had been having a "schizoid" time of it myself the past few months. Technically, I was supposed to be a reporter covering the legislature, but I was actually covering it more with my heart than with my mind. I had lobbied practically every legislator whenever I could nab him - on the house or senate floor, in the cloakrooms, even in the men's room.

Without thinking, I started rushing around the senate chamber, giving the bill's supporters ammunition against Ritzhaupt. Suddenly the gavel banged down.

"Will the reporter from The Daily Oklahoman please return to his rightful place at the press table," boomed the senate president.

Amidst the howls of the legislators, I sidled back among my fellow reporters.

But Chapman's speech had done the job. It was the end of brother Ritzhaupt. One after another, his amendments were beaten down. He finally got up on the floor and withdrew the rest of them. On roll call, he voted for the bill himself.

The whole debate was so typical of Oklahoma it deserves a word. This is a relatively new state, and its unfamiliarity with psychiatric terminology is more than understandable. But that unfamiliarity doesn't keep them from acting. Somehow, they seem to view everything in a fresh light. When a new idea hits them, they shy away at first. But when they decide its a good thing, neither hell nor high water can stop them from adopting it.

In the older states, excessive familiarity with the "fancy" words has many times lead to emasculation of action. Many states have been splitting miniscule follicles for 10 and 20 years, and have not yet passed a decent mental health act. Oklahoma passed one of the best mental health acts in the country in one session.

Another facet is worth mentioning. They'll fight like hell for their ideas but, when they're licked, they're the best sports in the world. They love a good fight but when its over, its done and gone. At times I felt like shooting Ritzhaupt, but I couldn't help feeling a tremendous respect for him when he swerved around to support the bill. He had been licked "fur and squr", and from that day on, he was an active supporter of a sound mental hygiene program.

SECTION 10 - WE GET INTO HOT WATER

But to come back to our troubles, and we were having plenty. While we were concentrating on the mental health act, we had pretty much neglected the appropriations. We had been warned that the legislature, in the last few days of the session, always ripped into every appropriation to make it fit into the budget picture. However, we were confident they wouldn't touch the moneys for the mental hospitals.

We were wrong again. On a Friday, five days before the close of the session, they whacked a million dollars from the four and a half millions assigned for new buildings at the institutions. In defense of the cut, the axe-wielders argued that not a single dollar was being appropriated for buildings at any of the many other state institutions, that we were getting plenty as is.

I have never been so mad in my life. I felt it was a lousy trick to play on the two million Oklahomans who had their heart in this crusade. But how could we get back at them? Everyone told me it was too late to do anything.

I paced the floor again Friday night, my good wife beside me. No Brahms for consolation, either. Saturday, I came down and wrote a straight story of what they had done.

Then I put a fresh piece of copy paper in the typewriter and beat out an editorial. I threw the facts and figures out of the window. I wrote something that I wanted to get under their hides.

I took it over and showed it to Stuart. He thought it was a little rough. He said he'd take it into the "Chief", but he had his doubts. I went home heartsick and weary. I drank a lot of

strong medicine Saturday night.

Monday morning, when I checked into the office, the place was already in a turmoil. I picked up a paper. There was my editorial, smack-dab in the middle of page one. The "Chief", still a fighter in his 70's, had locked horns for the final battle.

The editorial created a commotion the like of which I have never seen. The Daily Oklahoman is conservative in make-up style - none of those Hearstian front-page editorials. I had seen only one other editorial on page one since I had joined the paper in 1945. I knew its impact would be felt.

Here's the brief editorial, headed "Two More Years of Misery", as it appeared on the front page of The Daily Oklahoman for May 5, 1947:

"The legislature is in a hurry to get home.

"Speeding along toward adjournment, the house-senate conference committee has slashed a million dollars from the appropriations for new buildings at seven mental hospitals.

"It is probably unkind to remind the twenty-first legislature that the joint house-senate appropriations committee, back in February, agreed that the total building appropriation of three millions was the minimum needed to relieve the barbaric over-crowding at all state mental institutions.

"In a few days, the members of the twenty-first legislature will hurry happily down the statehouse steps and head in the direction of the warm May sun.

"But 10,000 mental patients in this state cannot head for home, nor can they bask in the rays of a benevolent sun. Crammed together in dilapidated buildings, they will continue to live out their days in filth and misery.

"Nor will these mentally sick people be able to protest this slash. They have no lobby. They cannot threaten the twenty-first legislature with retribution at the polls.

"But if these unfortunates had a voice, could they describe the heartbreak that will be visited upon them for the next two years because of this million dollar cut? Could they tell the legislators of the miseries of living in shadowland endless day upon endless day, and of the hope they had had that at last a sympathetic legislature would hear their cries for help?

"Even if they had the voice, they couldn't be heard. Their words would be too tired and weary. They have seen legislatures come and go, with their solemn pledges in February and their ruthless slashings in May. They would chide themselves for the naive hope that the twenty-first legislature would have been different."

Very explosive stuff. The legislature whipped up a collective froth an hour after the paper hit the streets. Members vied with one another in denouncing the paper.

Peaslee, who had rushed out to the capitol, called me up and told me all hell had broken loose. He was particularly disturbed at the reaction of Sen. Raymond Gary of Madill.

Gary, chairman of the powerful joint house-senate appropriations committee, had been our most ardent supporter. In the face of much die-hard opposition, he had given appropriations for the mental hospitals top priority. At the risk of political defeat and an end to a promising legislative career, he had fought off the powerful school bloc when it had demanded the lion's share of the 1948-49 budget.

He had opposed the million dollar cut, but had been voted down. When the editorial appeared, it hit him where he lived. He got up

on the senate floor and, in a quiet, factual manner, detailed for a solid hour just what the 1947 legislature was doing for the mental hospitals. He was plenty hurt.

Peaslee begged me to stay away from the legislature. He said they all knew I had written the editorial, and the sight of me would drive them into a frenzy.

To cap the climax, a joint resolution was introduced in the house of representatives by Rep. D.A. Segrest, Comanche, and Rep. George Campbell, Sand Springs. The next morning, the Tulsa Tribune front-paged the story with this lead paragraph:

"An editorial in the Daily Oklahoman Monday criticizing the house-senate conferees for what the newspaper claimed was a cut of $1 million in appropriations for new buildings at seven state mental hospitals, today brought down the wrath of house members not only on the Oklahoman but also upon the Tulsa Tribune and Tulsa World."

We were all mystified as to why the Tulsa papers were included in the attack, but the distinguished solons were so angry they hit out at anybody who had even a remote connection with a newspaper.

The Daily Oklahoman printed the full text of the resolution, a classic in the annals of Oklahoma legislative sessions. Here it is:

"Whereas, the house and senate conference committee by reason of lack of revenue in prospect for the biennium, has seen fit to keep appropriations within the constitutional limits hereinbefore advocated by such paragons of wisdom as The Daily Oklahoman, The Tulsa World, and The Tulsa Tribune, and,

"Whereas, the aforesaid alleged newspapers have seen fit in the furtherance of their own selfish desires, to boost the circulation of their gazettes by a series of unreliable and inaccurate sob stories, and,

"Whereas, by such disreputable tactics, said alleged newspapers have fattened upon the ill-gotten gains of an unsuspecting public to an enormous extent, and,

"Whereas, the hearts of the aforementioned alleged newspapers (if any), and those of the editors (if any), and those of the editorial writers (if any), have bled profusely and with righteous and vocal indignation at the action of the twenty-first legislature, and,

"Whereas, it is well known that the owners of said newspapers are very unselfish gentlemen, none of whom has amassed more than $15,000,000, nor less than $1,000,000, from the income of their libelistic scandal sheets, and are philanthropists of the first water,

"Now, therefore be it resolved by the twenty-first session of the Oklahoma legislature that a tax of one-half cent on each and every paper published by said newspapers be levied for the express purpose of providing adequate buildings for the mental hospitals in the state of Oklahoma, and that an additional tax of $1 be levied upon all libelous and scandalous statements, and those statements contained in said newspapers in which the truth is treated most recklessly, which fund is to provide a six-lane super highway between Tulsa and Oklahoma City, that these great public benefactors may commingle in unholy communion and bask in the unreflected glory of their feigned and ephemeral beneficence."

It was a masterful literary hatchet job, and I couldn't help howling when I saw a copy of it.

It was introduced late Monday afternoon, but ignored until Campbell insisted on Tuesday that the portion of Monday's session containing it be read again. That precipitated a fiery debate. Finally, amid all the hysterical hub-bub, Speaker Raymond Board roared that the measure would have to be assigned to a committee when it

came up for a second reading Wednesday.

I was getting a little worried. I asked Carl Stuart if Mr. Gaylord was disturbed about it.

"Disturbed?" he answered. "He's been through 40 years of this sort of thing. He loves nothing better than a good fight."

Campbell, his heart set on getting the resolution passed, moved that it be sent direct to the calendar. Board ignored the motion.

Then Rep. Joe Harshberger, Sperry, moved that the resolution be sent to the committee on deep sea navigation. Oklahoma, dry in more ways than one, hasn't enough water to justify a deep creek committee. The resolution was accordingly sent to the fictitious committee. I pulled my heart back from out of my throat and left the chamber.

The next day, when tempers cooled off a bit, much of the cut was restored and we were a little happier, but not much. We were afraid legislative resentment over the editorial would defeat the mental health bill.

When it hit the house floor, a furious debate started. The house leaders who were supposed to be handling the bill flubbed badly. Our chief supporter, a man in his 50's, had fallen violently in love. He equated everything, including psychiatry, with love. Our next best ally was not only in love, but a mystic to boot. Of such stuff is history made.

Several crippling amendments were tacked onto the bill Wednesday afternoon. That meant it would have to go into house-senate conference. But the legislature was preparing to adjourn Thursday night. Things never looked darker.

I had stayed away from the legislature since the appearance of the editorial. You know the story about the bull and the red flag.

Well, I have a mop of red hair. But when I heard about the house amendments, I jumped in a cab and rushed out.

I was in for a pleasant surprise. The legislators not only greeted me cordially, but kidded me about the editorial. It was another example of the bigness and freshness of this state. We had locked horns, it had been a knock-down, drag-out fight, but that was all over now. They wanted to know what they could do to get the bill through.

From 10 p.m. until midnight, we scurried around getting the conferees to put their names on a compromise report which had been hastily drawn up. The newly elected president of the Oklahoma Committee for Mental Hygiene, Mrs. Thomas W. Leach, wife of a wealthy Tulsa oil man, stationed herself a few feet from the rest room used by the legislators.

"The legislature had been in session for 14 hours, so I figured that was a good place to be," she said.

Mrs. Leach was a tower of strength those last few days. She had come over from Tulsa and taken a suite at the Skirvin during the last week of the legislature.

She was out at the capitol morning, noon and night. Possessing a liquid Southern accent and great personal charm, she turned it on everyone, even the senate page boys. The senators, many of them gallant men from the Old South, could brush aside a reporter or an executive secretary, but could they be rude to a flower of the old South? They weren't. They listened to the soothing voice of Mrs. Leach as magnolias bloomed on the dingy legislative walls. She patted them on their tired heads and assuaged the wounds created by the fiery editorial.

A little after midnight, due mainly to Mrs. Leach, we had enough

signatures to push the report over the top.

The next day, the last day of the session, the mental health act was passed.

SECTION 11 - WE HAD COME A LONG WAY

We had come a generation in a few short months. To sum up the achievements of the twenty-first legislature in the field of mental hygiene would take an article in itself.

Appropriations for the mental hospitals were more than double those voted by any previous legislature. In addition to three and a half million dollars for new buildings, an increase of more than one million was provided for additional personnel and considerably upped salaries. Provision for a minimum addition of 19 doctors, 21 nurses, 300 attendants, 12 occupational and recreational therapists, and five social workers were incorporated in the various bills.

The model mental health act was the greatest achievement of all. It set up voluntary admission of mental patients with the classification "mentally ill" instead of "insane". Counties were enjoined, under penalty of law, from putting patients in jail before committment to hospitals.

Under the new act, a mental patient admitted on a voluntary blank could not be held in a hospital more than 60 days unless the superintendent himself filed a written appeal for an additional stay. This appeal would be reviewed by a board of medical examiners.

The whole purpose of one section of the bill was to surround the patient with legal and medical safeguards, including the right to review of his case at his own request or that of any member of his family, right to apply for a writ of habeas corpus, and protection against attendant and employee abuse.

A revolutionary change in control of the mental institutions was brought about. They were taken out of politics and placed un-

der a mental health board composed of the dean of University of Oklahoma medical school, the state commissioner of health, the chairman of the board of affairs, and a psychiatrist and a general medical man appointed from the public by the governor. Four of the five members of the board were medical men.

Under the board was established the post of medical director of the mental institutions, qualifications for which were most rigid. The director had to have ten years practicing experience in psychiatry, five of which had to have been in a mental institution, and he had to be certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology.

He was given complete control of the administration of the hospitals. He was made responsible for the care and treatment of mental patients, given the right to recommend appointment of assistant psychiatric directors and heads of the mental hospitals, the power to investigate and remedy, by subpoena if necessary, any abuses in the care of the mentally ill, and the right to summon the mental hospital superintendents to his office at any time to bring about coordinated action toward better care for the mentally ill.

Provision for the setting up of mental health clinics, under the joint control of the state department of health and the medical director, signalized a brand new day in the launching of a campaign for early treatment and prevention of mental illness.

Oh, what a beautiful morning was May 11. You're O.K., Oklahoma, O.K! "I've got a wonderful feeling, everything's going my way".

But it hadn't all been sweetness and light, sunshine and sorghum.

The newspaper had been through one of the most punishing campaigns in journalistic history. Starting with the printing of the first series on the institutions in September, 1946, we had run over

250,000 words of copy on every imaginable phase of the situation. In the short space of nine months, we had carried more than 200 major news stories and 60 editorials and editorial columns on every conceivable facet of mental illness.

We had run the schizophrenic gamut from blood to fact to pointing the finger. We had hit everything from gory stories of the beating of patients to calm, penetrating analyses of the latest research developments in psychiatry.

I had written a long series of editorial columns against mechanical restraint of patients, quoting reams of statistics culled from practically every state in the country. I had followed it with a lengthy survey of clinical and preventive work in other states, again buttressing my contentions with a carload of figures.

A total of 30,000 copies of two of the series - "Misery Rules in State Shadowland" and "Let There Be Light" - were printed and sent out all over the state and nation.

And all this had been accomplished in the face of a dire newsprint shortage which had forced us to the point where we were printing 12 and 14 page papers several days a week.

But the response had been worth all the sweat and blood. The legislature, at first disinterested and then somewhat hostile, had overcome its prejudices and risen to great heights as it enacted one of the finest sets of mental health laws any state could boast of.

The Governor, a wealthy oil man and breeder of prize Hereford cattle, had evinced only a nodding interest in the problem at the start of the campaign. But, just as step by step he had picked himself up by the bootstraps from a small oil wildcatter to the state's top official post, so step by step he picked his way through the new horizons presented by the mental health problem.

During the last weeks of the legislature, he was a pillar of strength, putting all his forces behind passage of the mental health act. His attitude was typical of Oklahoma - blink when the idea first hits, stand back and take a long, slow look at it, then either push it up or stomp it into the ground. No half-way measures for Oklahoma - either all-out or thumbs down.

And then there were the people, the good solid people of the earth. They had swarmed to our rallies from the wheat fields, the oil wells, the alfalfa patches, from the panhandle out in the west to the short grass cattle country in the south. They had trudged up to the big capitol city and given their representatives some of the dangest plain-talk they'd ever bent an ear to. They had sat down, after a back-breaking 12 hours in the fields, and pencilled messages - having a tough time with big words like "psychiatry" and "committment" - demanding that Christian justice be meted out to their 10,000 brethren confined in the mental hospitals.

We were a little proud of ourselves at the paper. Two days after adjournment of the legislature, we printed a batch of letters wishing us God-speed and asking us to keep up the good fight. The nicest one came from Dr. Hugh Galbraith, Oklahoma director of the International Committee for Mental Hygiene, and recently elected president of the Topeka Psychoanalytical Society. He wrote, in part:

"In its unceasing, year-long fight to educate the people of this state to the problems and needs of the mentally ill, The Daily Oklahoman has performed a service which has few parallels in the annals of American journalism....

"A year ago, when your paper ran its first articles on mental illness, the majority of Oklahomans didn't even know the number of mental hospitals we had in the state. Today, thanks to your untir-

ing work, the majority of our citizenry has a detailed knowledge, not only of conditions in the mental hospitals, but of the latest information on prevention and cure of mental illness."